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Castro could drill off Florida coast

U.S. lawmakers aren't the only ones who, because of spiraling oil and gas prices and an unstable commodities market, have been studying the possibility of producing more domestic energy. Fidel Castro has also taken an interest, and his ambitions will, in a surprisingly short period of time, bring the Cuban drilling program much closer to the Florida coast.

Who can blame him? Castro has for years looked for new opportunities to develop his economy in the face of our trade embargo. He could only expect to rely on Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez's oil and gas giveaway for so long. So, with the intention of claiming billions of dollars in new revenues and reducing his country's dependence on foreign energy, Castro has taken to the high seas in an effort to acquire and produce as much oil and gas as he can.

But there's a rub: Cuba has neither the capacity nor the technical capability to produce this energy by itself. Castro has called in contractors from Canada, Spain, Norway -- even China -- to do it for him.

And not only has Cuba convened its own little United Nations to help get at vital and abundant supplies of offshore energy, it has chosen tracts of real estate in the Gulf of Mexico as close as 45 miles from Florida. Forty-five miles is just a bit farther than the distance between the University of Miami and Fort Lauderdale.

Imagine what Castro is thinking as we spend our time quarreling over whether we should produce American energy 100, 150 or 250 miles from the Florida coast while he makes arrangements to set up shop hundreds of miles closer. He must love that we've allowed emotion to win out over reason, facts to be dwarfed by fear and our nation's energy policy to be driven by unreasonable environmental concerns.

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